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ABSTRACT

This report of the Undergraduate Committee, Center for Teaching and Learning, University of North Dakota, to the University Curriculum Committee recommends the continued use of a system for reporting student progress according to three categories: CR for credit received, CD for credit deferred, and CW for credit withdrawn. After a discussion of traditional systems and non-graded systems and a summary of some relevant research, the report presents the experience of the Center with this grading system as indicated by the responses of students to a questionnaire. The conclusion was that the CR, CD, CW grading system would: (1) encourage student involvement in setting goals and standards in learning; (2) foster an emphasis on the process of evaluation characterized by ongoing mutual, critical and supportive exchange among persons engaged in learning (3) encourage creative exploration of ideas with no discredit of learning through error; (4) not penalize a student for academic failure; and (5) establish an atmosphere of broader exchange and challenge between and among faculty and students. A brief report of the same grading system is included, as well as the questionnaire and responses from faculty at schools of education and employers of teachers. (Author/CTM)

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EVALUATION (GRADING) IN THE NEW SCHOOL AND THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

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One of a series of final reports on the
Trainers of Teacher Trainers Program.

Center for Teaching and Learning
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, North Dakota
May 1974

An Introductory Statement

Evaluation (grading) ought to have a relationship, a consonance, to the goals of a program. Because the New School was committed to a high degree of personalization, student initiative, and integration in learning, traditional grading patterns were judged to be inappropriate. An alternative evaluation process was presented to the University of North Dakota's University-wide Curriculum Committee and Senate in September 1968. This process, along with a rationale, is presented as Item I of this TTT report. When the Center was organized it was necessary to present a new proposal to the University Curriculum Committee. Item II is a copy of the proposal. The New School's experience influenced significantly the proposal made by the Center. Both of the documents have been distributed widely. Colleges and universities from throughout the country have requested them and have apparently found them useful. We felt they were important documents relating to the University of North Dakota's TTT experience and ought to be preserved in this series of TTT reports.

Vito Perrone
May 1974

A NEW SCHOOL PROPOSAL FOR A SYSTEM OF EVALUATION

The New School has as its major task the preparation of a new kind of elementary teacher. It strives to educate students to acquire the qualities of mind and behavior which will assist them in nurturing the creative tendencies in the young and in introducing a more individualized mode of instruction into the schools of North Dakota.

The faculty and student body recognize that any institution of higher learning, if it is to be effective in contributing to a change in the educational fabric of its society, must itself become a model of the kind of educational environment it is promoting. The New School in all its educational endeavors will strive to be such a model. To be an effective model, the New School must have a system of evaluation which is compatable with its educational philosophy.

Evaluation patterns can be justified on many grounds. But the ultimate test of any evaluation or grading system ought to be its effectiveness in the promotion of learning. Any discussion of grading ought to keep this concern central. The New School believes that there are alternatives to the established grading system that will contribute more effectively to an improvement in the environment for learning.

The New School proposal which follows is described in three parts. The first part identifies the actual marks which would be entered into a student's academic record along with an interpretation of those marks. The second part outlines the procedure the New School would use in arriving

at a determination of course marks as well as some justification for that procedure. The third part is a response to some of the questions that are often raised when a non-traditional marking system is proposed.

I

The New School proposes that at the end of each semester, and after assessment of the student's progress (as described in section II), one of three marks will be entered into the student's academic record for each course in which he is enrolled:

(a) If, at the end of the semester, the student has completed the objectives of the course, a mark of CR is recorded. This mark indicates that credit for the course is received.

(b) If, at the end of the semester, a student's progress in a course is such as to warrant further work, a mark of CD is recorded. This mark signifies that the course is still in progress for that student and that credit for the course is deferred until the objectives for the course have been completed. The student will have one calendar year to complete the work necessary for credit to be received. If objectives are completed during this extended period then the course mark shall be changed from CD to CR. If work is not completed during this period, credit for the course is withdrawn [see (c) below]. This mark should not be associated in any way with course failure. It should be interpreted only as a means by which students can be given increased flexibility in the period of time needed to achieve course objectives.

(c) If, at the end of the semester, a student has not completed the

objectives of the course and, by mutual agreement between student and teacher, it is thought that the student should not continue in the course, then a mark of CW is recorded. This mark indicates that the opportunity to receive credit is withdrawn. Withdrawal of credit does not prohibit a student from enrolling again in the same course. Because of the many possible reasons surrounding a student's withdrawal from a course, this mark should not be associated in any way with failure.

II

Grades and Motivation for Learning

Course grades act as powerful incentives which satisfy many strong and varied motives not directly associated with learning, e.g., teacher and parental approval, career or monetary pursuits, and the feeling of accomplishment. The anticipation of being graded greatly influences the material a student studies and learns. One psychologist thinks that grades are so strong a motivating force that they are responsible for our inability to establish the superiority of one teaching approach over another.

The traditional letter grading system is often justified as an effective instrument for motivating students to learn. However, this type of motivation tends to be extrinsic to the learning process. Traditional grading practices encourage students more toward satisfying the formal course requirements set by the instructor than in developing an intrinsic motivation for learning. Satisfaction is often found in the grade itself rather than in the sense of joy and accomplishment inherent in the learning situation.

The New School proposal on grading is designed to minimize the "external" appeals of grades while at the same time contributing to the creation of an environment where learning is intrinsically motivated.

Teacher-Student Relationships

In designing a system of evaluation, consideration must be given to the effect of "grades" upon the teacher-student relationships. The New School would like to encourage the development of more cooperative, non-threatening relationships between faculty and students. If a system of evaluation is being designed for educational purposes, then it ought to promote better communication and cooperation between teacher and student. The traditional letter grading system is limited in this regard. If a system of evaluation can encourage greater assumption of responsibility by the student for his own learning then there is a greater chance for more positive teacher-student relationships to develop.

Grades and Creativity

There is the indication from several sources[1] that the correlation of grades with creative achievement is generally very low. "There is the further argument that the structured constraints of a 'system' of grading have not merely a neutral but actually a deleterious effect on creative performance." Some of these studies also indicate that certain non-intellectual factors usually associated with academic achievement (as determined

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[1] ACT Research Report, No. 7, September, 1965, The Relationship Between College Grades and Adult Achievement: A Review of the Literature.

by traditional grading practices) are factors more often found in persons with less potential for creativity. Most grading systems by their very nature tend to reward the hardworking but conforming student while penalizing the more unconventional and imaginative student. The New School wishes to adopt a system of evaluation which, if not actually promoting creativity, at least does not have a deleterious effect upon student creativity.

Creativity and Self-appraisal

Carl Rogers, writing on creativity, argues that "creativity in learning is best facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic.... The best research organizations in industry, as well as the academic world, have learned that external evaluation is largely fruitless if the goal is creative work."[2] In order to facilitate creative expression in its students, the New School plans to initiate a procedure of evaluation which will allow each student to assume a larger share of the responsibility for defining and evaluating his educational efforts in each course. The student and faculty member will jointly work toward increasing the student's ability to intelligently evaluate his own academic progress. All evaluation procedures will be structured so as to make student self-appraisal an essential part of the student's educational experience in the New School.

The New School is aware that there may be some cases where a significant

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[2] Rogers, C. The Facilitation of Significant Learning, in L. Siegel (ed.), Instruction: Some Contemporary Viewpoints.

discrepancy will develop between student and faculty evaluations of student progress in a course. Where these cases do occur and the student and faculty member cannot, between them, resolve their differences, the issue will be referred to a student-faculty evaluation committee for resolution.

There may also be instances where a student is successful in his academic endeavors but has certain traits that would make him unsuitable as an elementary teacher. The faculty will be continually alert to such students and will recommend, where necessary, that a student not be continued in the program.

Self-appraisal and the Determination of Educational Goals

Because the New School wishes to encourage student evaluation, it is imperative that goals of the total instructional program and of each course be clear to the student. If self-appraisal is to be successful, students must participate to a greater degree in the determination of the educational objectives of the New School program. To accomplish both objectives the whole process of evaluation must begin at the beginning of each course in which the student enrolls. The structuring of student activities within each course area will be made only after the student and instructor have engaged in thoughtful examination of the student's academic and professional background, his present needs and expectations, and the educational objectives of the New School. Special attention will be given to increasing the flexibility in the way a student reaches his goals and the period of time needed to achieve those goals.

III

Grades and Teaching Success

Letter grades are sometimes justified as a necessary means for predicting and selecting successful teachers. In the review referred to earlier (p.4) of forty-six studies on the relationship of college grades to adult achievement, it is stated that "present evidence strongly suggests that college grades bear little or no relationship to any measures of adult achievement." In studies specifically related to teaching, it was found that grades are not significantly related to any overall measure of teaching success. From these studies it would appear that the traditionally-used grade point average is of little value in trying to identify teaching personnel of high quality. Other measures such as jointly written student-faculty evaluations, covering a broad spectrum of student qualities of "academic" ability and achievement, might serve as a more accurate predictor.

Grades and Standards

Some persons may feel that any change in the established grading pattern will somehow endanger the institution's academic standards. Associated with this feeling is the belief that there is some logical or causal connection between grading and standards. However, a university may have only one grading system, yet have differing standards among its many faculty and several academic divisions. Inconsistencies can be noted in faculty use of a common grading system. Even though two instructors may agree on the performance level of the same group of students, one might give a

grade of A to only the top 5 percent while the other gives the same grade to the top 30 percent. One faculty member may choose to grade "on a curve" while the other grades on some preconceived standard. Or possibly both will grade on different curves or upon different standards.

It is quite possible for a university to have alternative patterns of evaluation while maintaining a single standard of quality in all programs. The only problem is in defining the standard in terms other than those of a single evaluation pattern. It is rare to find a college that has created any really acceptable definition of academic achievement that could be used for this purpose.

The New School, in proposing its marking system, has no intention of lowering standards. Instead, the New School hopes that through its system of evaluation it can contribute to the development of a broader conception of educational standards. There is certainly a great need for the educational community to encourage and stimulate more individualization of academic standards. The New School in proposing its evaluation program plans to meet that need.

Grades and School Transfer

Other concerns about non-traditional grading systems include the problems of transfer to other schools and admission to graduate school. The variability of grading patterns around the country is increasing rapidly. The pass-fail system has gained increased popularity. As long as any non-traditional grading pattern is clearly articulated, no college seems to

have serious difficulty in translating the record of a transfer student into the college's own terms.

Perhaps the more potentially serious problem is adopting a non-traditional grading pattern to established graduate school admission policies. Some graduate schools do have difficulty in determining superior student achievement from the observation of a non-traditional student transcript. But this difficulty, whether recognized or not, also exists with the traditional grading pattern. The reason is that there is simply no evidence that college grades can effectively predict success in graduate school. This situation, however, is not a problem if the graduate schools will take the time to read the comprehensive dossiers submitted for each prospective student.

The problem of graduate school enrollment for New School undergraduates is not a serious one, for the New School program spans the undergraduate and graduate years. Most entering students will continue through to the completion of their master's degree program.

CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING:

EVALUATION PROPOSAL

PRESENTED TO

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

JULY 1972

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INTRODUCTION

This report is submitted by the Undergraduate Committee, Center for Teaching and Learning. Included in the report are a proposal for the reporting of a student's progress toward the completion of degree requirements in the study of elementary education and the rationale for this recommendation. Vito Perrone, Dean of the Center for Teaching and Learning, has been asked to present this proposal along with members of the Committee on Evaluation, Undergraduate Committee.

Proposal

At the end of each semester, and after assessment of the student's progress in elementary education one of three marks* will be entered into the student's academic record for each area of study in which the student is enrolled:

(a) If, at the end of the semester, the student has completed objectives of the course or activity, a mark of CR is recorded. This mark indicates that credit for the course is received.

(b) If, at the end of the semester, a student's progress in a course or activity is such as to warrant further work, a mark of CD is recorded. This mark signifies that the course or activity is still in progress for that student and that credit is deferred until the objectives have been completed. The student will have one calendar year to complete the work necessary for credit to be received., If objectives are

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*The process of evaluation is considerably more extensive, demanding considerable writing by students, teaching faculty, and advisors. This process is outlined in a separate document.

completed during this extended period then the mark shall be changed from CD to CR. If work is not completed during this period, credit is withdrawn (see c below). A CD should not be associated in any way with failure. It should be interpreted only as a means by which students can be given increased flexibility in the period of time needed to achieve the objectives of a course or activity.

(c) If, at the end of the semester, a student has not completed the objectives established and, by mutual agreement between student and teacher, it is thought that the student should not continue in the course or activity, then a mark of CW is recorded. This mark indicates that the opportunity to receive credit is withdrawn. Withdrawal of credit does not prohibit a student from enrolling in the same course of study. Because of the many possible reasons surrounding a student's withdrawal, this mark should not be associated in any way with failure.

Rationale for Proposal

The rationale for a credit received/deferred system can be broken down into three general areas:

(a) The effectiveness of the dominant A-F grading system in achieving purposes claimed by its defenders;

(b) the effects on students and teachers of this grading system;

(c) the viability of existing non-graded alternative (such as Pass-Fail).

In this report we will consider evidence that bears on each of the three areas.

Availability of Research Studies

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education, recently published a review of 200 articles, papers, and reports about grades appearing

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The Center Undergraduate Committee has recommended that during the fall semester of the 1972-73 academic year the Center community determine whether in the future there should be a student option of requesting a letter grade (A,B,C) at the beginning of a course of study.

from 1965-70. About one-fourth of the items considered the form of grades, especially whether Pass-Fail should replace A through F. Another one-fourth considered the use of GPA to predict graduate success. The remaining one-half ranged over a variety of topics: variability in grading standards, disadvantage of grades, effects of grades on students, use of grades in predicting occupational success, determinants of grades, and the social effects of grades. The reviewer (Warren, 1971) stated that the studies left large gaps and led to only a few firm conclusions:

(1) students approve of P-F grading, but when offered a P-F option, often don't elect the option to take courses they otherwise wouldn't have taken.

(2) deans and registrars disapprove of Pass-Fail grading in undergraduate courses.

(3) undergraduate grades predict first-year graduate and professional school grades about as well as they have for years but not very well most of the time, occasionally quite well, occasionally not at all.

EFFECTIVENESS OF GRADING IN ACHIEVING ITS PURPOSES

One of the major problems in using grades is knowing precisely what they represent. Critical to the grading process is the translation of evaluation results into a symbol. This symbol then represents a single dimension presenting some level of academic achievement. Yet academic achievement is itself defined only in terms of composites of course grades and has no independent definition against which the validity of course grades can be checked. Thus all who use grades are stuck with symbols usually equated with excellent, good, average, poor and failing. These words,

which we all learned in Freshman composition classes, describe virtually nothing. Both the determination and understanding of grades has been a long time struggle for those who give them, receive them, and make use of them for vital decision making.

Assuming for the moment that colleges and universities should evaluate students and keep academic records of their progress, what purposes are served by such evaluation and grading? The generally accepted purposes of grades include: informational feedback to students about their level of achievement, motivation of students, selection for advanced education or employment, and other institutional decisions. The use and effectiveness of grading for these purposes will be discussed.

Information Feedback

For students, who are the "consumers" of education, feedback might be the most important purpose of grades if they were a tool to facilitate learning. But evaluating (the assessment of performance) and grading (the reporting of assessment results) should not be confused.

Stallings and Leslie (1970) reported a survey of students at the University of Illinois in which most students did not consider grades to perform a useful feedback function. Also the evaluative procedures that lead to the most effective feedback are often not those that are used in ranking students (Bloom, 1968; Husek, 1969).

The use of grades as a form of feedback does not involve the student in the development of standards for evaluating his or her

own performance. Feedback should be related to the processes as well as the products of learning, differentiating among various forms and areas of academic accomplishment and initiating directions for further study. An important part of the learning process is error but, in a grading system, error is equated with failure and made costly by being permanently recorded.

Motivating Students

It is often asserted that grades encourage students to learn things they would not learn otherwise. Studies of Pass-Fail grading have indicated that the nature of the grades does influence how students will allocate their study time (Feldmesser, 1969; Freeman, 1967; Karlins, 1969). However, these studies are based on optional P-F grading where most often a student was permitted to take one course per term on a Pass-Fail basis. Typically Pass-Fail options only permit a student to take courses outside their major field. It is not so surprising that a student would emphasize those courses in their major field which most universities require and which often constitute a separate core GPA in the evaluation of a student's college work.

In those institutions where a complete Pass-Fail grading or descriptive grading has been used, no evidence has been found that students extend themselves less than they would with A-F grading. Sarah Lawrence College has operated without grades for many years (Murphy and Raushenbush, 1960).

And, at the University of California, Santa Cruz, where complete Pass-Fail grading has been the practice since their opening in 1965, the faculty saw no evidence that students worked less diligently than had students at other institutions where more conventional grading systems were used (Comm. M. Educ. Policy, 1970).

Warren (1971) describes an experimental program that provides a useful comparison between a graded and an ungraded instructional system. In six liberal arts colleges, selected students pursued a 4 year program of independent study without specified course requirements and without grades. The students in the experimental program were evaluated but these results were given directly to the student. Although student selection and other elements of the program may have influenced the results, some inferences were thought valid. One tentative conclusion was that grades played only a small part, if any, in inducing students to learn. The anxiety usually connected with grades was found to be related to impending examinations even though no grades were being given.

This program did have some drawbacks. The primary source of student discomfort was the ambiguity of many aspects of the program due to its newness. Expectations were not defined and students were uncertain about their ability to set their own goals and evaluate themselves. This anxiety is not so surprising and was most probably experienced also by faculty; this should be considered in program planning. It is suggested that some of this discomfort may be unavoidable and might be a small price to pay in a learning

experience that involves individuals and groups in the task of setting goals and determining their progress toward them. That this is true is supported by the comments of New School graduates concerning their reaction to first experiencing a non-graded system (see page 24 of this report).

Selection for Graduate Education or Employment

Graduate and professional schools are the primary beneficiaries of the use of grades for selection and thus seem to be one of the most vocal groups concerned with change in grading or evaluation procedures. Although differences in educational purpose might imply different selection procedures, still all depend heavily on undergraduate GPA.

A questionnaire was sent to 276 deans of universities in the Council of Graduate Schools, asking their response to consideration of graded and nongraded transcripts in admission decisions (Hassler, 1969). While most preferred to evaluate admissions on the basis of grades, over half said they would accept for admission a student with good recommendations and every course non-graded. The basic reason given for preferring a graded transcript was greater ease and accuracy. Yet, in a review of studies concerned with undergraduate grades as a predictor of graduate performance, Warren (1971) found that correlations reported between undergraduate and first year graduate school grades ranged from about -.20 to +.60, with the median correlation being .30. Undergraduate grades

generally do not correlate highly with academic performance in the later phases of graduate education, nor with other criteria of academic success, such as actual completion of the graduate program (Hackman, Wiggins and Bass, 1970). In view of the great variability of the correlation coefficients and the fact that the extreme values tend to occur with samples of fewer than 100 students (Warren, 1971), little can be said with confidence about the relationship to be expected between undergraduate grades and graduate school performance. Thus, there is no evidence that conventional grades are better predictors than are non-conventional evaluations, nor that students educated under a non-conventional evaluation system are less likely to be successful in graduate school than are students who have been graded conventionally.

In a review of forty-six studies on the relationship of college grades to adult achievement, it is stated that "present evidence strongly suggests that college grades bear little or no relationship to any measures of achievement" (Hoyt, 1965). In another review (Hoyt, 1966) of twelve studies specifically concerned with the relationship between college grades and teaching success, it was found, with few exceptions, that neither over-all college grades nor grades in specific courses were significantly related to any measure of teaching success and that success in teaching should be viewed as a multidimensional concept. The majority of these studies used supervisors' ratings of total performance as the chief criterion. Ratings of specific aspects of teacher performance have been less frequently examined.

The question of error in admission decisions highlights one of the problems in assessing the usefulness of grades in selection to higher educational institutions. For error to be measured, some definition of "correct" decisions is required. An admitted student who earns good grades and completes the course of study is considered to represent a "correct" admission decision. But deans and faculty members often deny that high probability of earning good grades is, by itself, an adequate basis for admission, and the correctness of decisions to reject applicants is neither defined nor measured (Warren, 1971). Given the lack of empirically established meaning of grades there is little support for the practice of establishing a relatively high GPA cut-off point and then considering "other characteristics" in selecting candidates for advanced study.

To speak to the concern that students who graduate from the University with two years or more in a Credit Received-Credit Withdrawn grading system might be at a disadvantage when seeking employment or attempting to go on to graduate school, it was decided to get some first hand information from potential employers and graduate schools. We developed a brief telephone questionnaire. This instrument asked the following questions:

> What criteria do you use to evaluate applicants?
> Which of these are the most important criteria in your decision making?
> Would a student who has graduated from a College of Education which uses a Credit Received-Credit Withdrawn grading system be at a disadvantage?
> [If yes] Would that be a serious or mild disadvantage?
> Could that disadvantage be overcome by a folder or dossier of the student's learning experiences, with evaluation of those experiences by the student and by faculty?

We called superintendents of school systems in 5 states - North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana and Idaho. Not one school system indicated students from a CR-CW grading system would be at a disadvantage. All of the school systems said a folder or dossier would be helpful. Most referred to interviews, teaching and student teaching experience and recommendations as the most important factors in their hiring.

We telephoned a variety of graduate schools. Generally we attempted to talk with the Dean of the Educational Graduate School. It was our feeling that graduate schools of education were the most relevant graduate programs for graduates of the Center, and we knew that most universities leave the major decision making regarding graduate admissions to the department which is primarily concerned. We telephoned regional universities, other colleges which we knew our graduates had attended, and several prominent schools with good national reputations for their graduate programs in education. The names of the schools called are: University of South Dakota, University of Nebraska, University of Minnesota, Moorhead State College, Bemidji State College, University of Montana, Harvard University, University of Massachusetts, Antioch College, and Michigan State University.

Only one school, the University of Montana, indicated students from a CR-CW grading system would be at a disadvantage. Several admitted this kind of applicant presented new problems but not to the extent of disadvantaging the students. Most said flatly

no - students from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage. Many referred to the trend away from grades, to the unreliability and lack of meaning GPA's have. Most schools wanted to know more about their applicants that what can be learned from graded transcripts, and all were of the opinion that the dossier would be very helpful. Some of the schools look at recommendations carefully. Some have questions on their application forms which they read in their admissions process. Many require previous experience. Several have decentralized admissions to allow for closer scrutiny of applicants. Several deans indicated that other departments were more reluctant than the education department to give up reliance upon GPA.

As a result of this short survey we are encouraged that employers and education graduate schools will not be biased against applicants from a CR-CW grading system. These results are also confirmed by the experiences of New School graduates who have encountered few difficulties in obtaining employment or graduate school admission. We expect to follow up on this survey by giving this information to our students, and by encouraging them early in the year to look into graduate schools and school systems in which they might be interested. Where problems are encountered we believe they can be overcome.

Further evidence of admission to graduate school for students of non-conventional evaluation systems is provided in a study (Pitcher, Bosler, 1970) of the 1969 graduates of the University of

California, Santa Cruz who applied to graduate school. It was reported that more than half of the graduates encountered no problem in gaining admission, nine percent did report problems and thirty-five percent were undecided. Most students who applied were admitted, though not always to the college of first choice. They reported no information on granting of fellowships.

Another study concerned with graduate admissions was done by the Office of Admissions and Records, Governors State University (1972). In this study, eleven universities identified as having highly non-traditional grading systems were sent questionnaires asking them to identify the number of students experiencing difficulty transferring courses with non-traditional grades. Out of the nine responses, six replied that none to few students encountered any such difficulties, two universities responded that 1/3 and 15-20% respectively encountered difficulties and there was one no reply. No additional information was given in the report to clarify the higher rate of encountered difficulties in two of the universities, or how this difficulty in the study was defined or identified.

The report also implied that many admissions committees lack experience or guidelines in evaluating non-traditional transcripts.

Another part of this same study was concerned with the attitudes and hiring practices of prospective employers toward graduates of non-traditional grading institutions. A survey was conducted among one hundred industrial firms and 25 government agencies in the Chicago Metropolitan area. The study found that previous work experiences of

an applicant was the most important criterion in selecting employees. In terms of government agencies, all choices of employment are made on the basis of civil service tests so that an ungraded transcript would not affect the choice.

Since admissions to graduate schools must continue to be selective as long as applicants far outnumber those who can be admitted, the alternative is to find more specific student attributes or combinations of attributes that are pertinent to the performance the selecting institution expects from its students. More detailed evaluation information may cause some complaint that it requires more time for admissions decisions, but it also requires knowing more about the candidate than is available on transcripts.

Institutional Uses of Grades

Grades are used to make decisions about re-enrollment, honors, financial aid and completion of degree requirements. One problem in using grades for these purposes is their instability during a four year undergraduate period. Humphreys (1968) reported a correction of .34 between the freshman and senior year GPA. For all of the foregoing decisions, criteria explicit in faculty and student evaluations could be used and thus also provide a broader base of information.

EFFECTS OF GRADING ON STUDENTS

Various consequences of grading are often suggested and depending on which point one wants to "prove" one could probably search out supporting evidence.

Some of the consequences of grading are reported by Warren (1971) in his review of relevant literature:

(1) the kinds of activities that produce good grades do not produce optimal learning

(2) grading often limits the student's allocation of study time and effort depending upon interest, usefulness and difficulty

(3) grading often limits responsibility of deciding what's important

(4) grading often limits the exploration of different approaches and related content and experiences

(5) grading places limitations on failure/making it too costly

(6) grading supports behavior to please instructor

(7) grading tends to have a built-in self fulfilling prophecy that only a few will do well

(8) grading practices set a time limit on learning.

However, one of the major objections to the use of a graded system in the Center is that prescribing in detail what students must do to earn a grade removes from students (a) the responsibility for deciding to a larger degree what is important and (b) an incentive to evaluate their own actions. Creativity and self appraisal are important processes for any learner and certainly for teachers. Writing on creativity (in "The Facilitation of Significant Learning," in L. Siegel (ed.), Instruction: Some Contemporary Viewpoints), Carl Rogers argues that "creativity in learning is best facilitated when self-criticism and self-evaluation are basic. . . . The best research organizations in industry, as well as the academic world, have

learned that external evaluation is largely fruitless if the goal is creative work."

VIABILITY OF EXISTING NON-GRADED EVALUATION SYSTEMS

Extent of Alternative Systems in Colleges and Graduate Schools

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers early in 1971 conducted a nationwide survey of graduate policies at member institutions. It was found that the changes reported were in the direction of departures from the traditional grading system (Governors State University, 1972). This same survey reported that eighty-six percent of the institutions allow the students to use the pass/fail (or credit/no record) option for less than one quarter of the credits applicable toward a bachelor's degree. Ninety-four percent of the institutions limited the credit to less than fifty percent of the degree program.

In another survey (Benson, 1969), a questionnaire was sent to 287 members of the Council of Graduate Schools. Out of the 240 responses, 127 reported using systems other than A-F, either in part or completely. Included in these systems were Pass-Fail, Satisfactory-Unsatisfactory, and Pass-No Credit. Use of the less traditional systems increased markedly in the last five years and varied widely. Advantages listed by the institutions comprising the Benson study were that these systems were more realistic and there was less pressure on students. Disadvantages were the

administrative confusion and the fear that students would be penalized in competing for scholarships.

Reports of Non-Graded Systems

Since the experiences of individuals and schools which have used non-graded systems is important evidence, reports from three institutions using non-graded evaluation will be considered. One report is from the University of California, Santa Cruz where a non-graded system has been used since the college open in 1965; another from a student who experienced such a system at Governor's State University and who also conducted a survey of four other institutions; and finally a report from the New School, University of North Dakota, where a Credit Received/Credit Deferred system has been used since 1968.

University of California, Santa Cruz

The report from the University of California, Santa Cruz, Committee on Educational Policy (1970), was a comprehensive appraisal of the Pass-Fail evaluation procedure used there since 1965. The only exception to the total use of a Pass-Fail system is that at the beginning of non-introductory science courses students may elect to receive letter grades. This option was kept open in view of the admission policies of some professional schools which use grades in science courses as a major criterion. The report suggests, this option may well die from lack of use, since only a small fraction of UCSC students ever take a course for a letter grade.

The response to the Pass-Fail evaluation is a fairly general consensus among students and faculty that it has been a success. The report concludes that the effects of their evaluation methods are beneficial to student morale:

> The distortion of the educational experience caused by student anxiety over which letter grade will be received is almost eliminated. One might presume that since the evaluation [process] at S.C. is in fact very probing, the "reward" of good evaluations would motivate students in the same neurotic way the letter grade "reward" system does. This proves not to be true in practice. Students are indeed interested in their evaluations; they read them and think about them. But they feel more nearly free to gauge the amount and direction of work for each course by their own choice and motivation.
>
> Students at S.C. work as hard or perhaps harder than most students at most major universities. True, some do not learn a great deal during their stay at U.C.S.C., however, our feeling is that this problem reflects human nature more than our particular grading system.
>
> The Pass-Fail plus evaluation system leads to a significant change in student attitude and morale. The instructors appear to be more on the student's side, more like resources for the aid of the students and less like stern judges.

The study does recognize the difficulties that some graduate and professional schools report in evaluating a Santa Cruz transcript, but the college has found that qualified graduates manage to gain admission, financial aid, and scholarships for graduate work, though not always (as is true even for students with a more traditional graded transcript) at the school of first choice.

A consequence of this review of student and faculty experiences since 1965 was the university's decision in 1970 to continue with its evaluation system.

Office of Admissions and Records - Governors State University

One portion of this report on the traditional grading patterns published by the Office of Admissions and Records, Governors State University, was written by a student who conducted a survey of student attitudes concerning a pass-no credit evaluation system.

A questionnaire was sent to 223 graduates of four schools which had used, to some extent, a non-graded system. Response to the questionnaire was approximately 24%, roughly half male and half female. The results showed that of those graduates who had studied under a non-graded system, ninety-two percent had favorable impressions, seven percent unfavorable, and one percent of them had mixed emotions.

The favorable comments were:

(a) relieves pressures of grade point average

(b) freedom to explore unfamiliar disciplines without risk of penalty

(c) closer student-faculty relationship

(d) instructor evaluations are more meaningful than grades--"A", "B", "C", etc.

(e) allows one to fulfill individual needs rather than compete with other students

(f) a bachelor degree is for education not necessarily for job training and the non-graded system encourages one to expand his areas of understanding.

The unfavorable comments were reported as being few, but were:

(a) written evaluations tended to be more descriptive than evaluative.

(b) grades are needed for entrance into graduate school and employment.

New School

The data contained in this report were compiled from returns of 59 questionnaires completed by New School undergraduate students, graduate students and alumni. Near the end of May, 1972 a questionnaire (which is attached) was mailed to 100 randomly selected New School students and alumni. Due to the limitations of time, no follow-up was done on non-respondents.

The 59 respondents ranged in age from 20 to 61 with an average age of 30. On the average the respondents had been exposed to 15 years of graded education as elementary, secondary and college students. Also as students the respondents have, on the average, been involved in two years of non-traditional grading practices. As elementary or secondary school teachers 39 respondents indicated that they had been involved in graded systems for an average of eight years with a range of from one to 28 years. Twenty one respondents indicated that as teachers they had been involved in a non-graded system from one to two years.

Table 1 presents the data obtained when respondents were asked to express their opinions (feelings, attitudes) toward graded and non-graded forms of evaluation. The respondents were asked to consider the same 16 items in the context of graded and non-graded systems of evaluation. From the percentage responses in Table 1 it is evident that the respondents favor a non-graded system of evaluation when reacting to the stimuli presented.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE RESPONSES WHEN CONSIDERING GRADED AND NON-GRADED SYSTEMS OF EVALUATION (N=59)

	% Response					
	SA*	A	D	SD	NR	Item
Graded	1	16	38	34	11	1. Has positive motivating effect
Non-graded	19	63	11	--	7	on the learner.
Graded	46	44	5	5	--	2. Produces greater competition
Non-graded	--	4	60	30	7	among students.
Graded	--	4	44	49	4	3. Encourages self evaluation
Non-graded	46	53	--	--	2	
Graded	--	7	42	44	7	4. Enhances learning.
Non-graded	44	53	--	--	4	
Graded	--	2	39	58	2	5. Promotes closer-teacher-student
Non-graded	54	42	2	--	2	relationship.
Graded	2	5	50	38	5	6. Promotes student respect for
Non-graded	30	51	11	--	9	teachers.
Graded	--	11	49	37	4	7. Promotes teacher respect for
Non-graded	30	53	14	--	4	students.
Graded	--	--	39	54	7	8. Increases exploration of wider
Non-graded	61	30	4	--	5	range of courses.
Graded	--	4	42	53	2	9. Encourages more meaningful
Non-graded	47	47	5	--	2	teacher evaluation.
Graded	--	--	32	67	2	10. Reflects adequately what the
Non-graded	20	43	23	--	14	student learns.
Graded	--	--	43	53	3	11. Encourages more meaningful
Non-graded	36	59	3	--	2	student evaluation
Graded	--	2	51	44	4	12. Increases student involvement
Non-graded	42	56	--	--	2	in learning activities.
Graded	--	4	39	47	11	13. Promotes more relevant career
Non-graded	33	47	7	--	12	learning activities.
Graded	--	2	26	65	7	14. Promotes more relevant personal
Non-graded	65	35	--	--	--	learning activities.

TABLE 1--Continued

% Response SA*	A	D	SD	NR	Item
Graded 2	33	32	25	9	15. Promotes more content learning.
Non-graded 28	32	12	4	25	
Graded --	--	28	70	2	16. Promotes greater self-directed
Non-graded 65	33	--	--	2	learning.

*SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree, NR=No Response

Table 2 presents the data related to the degree of concern expressed regarding the effect of two years of non-traditional grading on admission to graduate school, financial aid and employment.

TABLE 2

EXPRESSED DEGREE OF CONCERN REGARDING THE EFFECT OF TWO YEARS OF NON-GRADED EDUCATION ON ADMISSION TO GRADUATE SCHOOL, FINANCIAL AID AND EMPLOYMENT (N=59)

% Response NC*	SC	MC	GC	NR	Item
40	26	16	16	2	1. Admission into Graduate School
53	17	7	14	9	2. Financial Aid
46	25	9	16	5	3. Employment opportunities

*NC=No Concern, SC=Slight Concern, MC=Modern Concern, GC=Great Concern

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents expressed no concern or slight concern to each of the three items listed in Table 2. Respondents expressed the most concern over admission into graduate school, where 32 percent indicate moderate to great concern.

Table 3 provides data on the preferred system of evaluation and the expressed strength of the preference. As can be seen from Table 3 none of the respondents selected the totally graded option (the options were described in the questionnaire which is attached).

TABLE 3

PREFERRED SYSTEM OF EVALUATION AND EXPRESSED STRENGTH OF PREFERENCE (N=59)

Frequency and % of Response Preference			Frequency of Response Strength of Preference		
Frequency	%	Item	Not Very Strong	Moderately Strong	Very Strong
0	-	A. Totally graded*	0	0	0
32	57	B. Totally non-graded	0	1	31
16	29	C. Mixed system	1	12	3
6	11	D. Mixed restricted system	0	4	2
2	3	E. No Preference	2	0	0
3	-	F. No Response			

*See the attached questionnaire for a description of each option (A-E).

The totally non-graded option received 57 percent preference with 31 of the 32 respondents indicating a very strong preference. The mixed system received 29 percent preference with one respondent indicating

a strength of preference as not very strong, 12 respondents indicating a moderately strong preference and 3 respondents indicating a very strong preference. The mixed restricted system received 11 percent of the total response with four of the six respondents expressing a moderately strong preference and two respondents expressing a very strong response. In summary the data in Table 3 indicates that the majority of the respondents favor the totally non-graded system of evaluation and generally express a stronger preference for that choice.

Table 4 presents data relating to respondents' opinions concerning preference and strength of preference for an evaluation

TABLE 4

PREFERENCE FOR A SYSTEM OF EVALUATION FOR THE CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING AND STRENGTH OF PREFERENCE (N=59)

Frequency and % of Response Preference			Frequency of Response Strength of Preference		
Frequency	%	Item	Not Very Strong	Moderately Strong	Very Strong
0	-	A. Totally graded*	0	0	0
22	40	B. Totally non-graded	0	2	20
24	44	C. Mixed system	1	14	9
6	11	D. Mixed restricted system	0	4	2
3	5	E. No preference - no knowledge of Center programs	0	1	2
4	-	F. No response			

*See the attached questionnaire for a description of each option (A-E).

system for the Center for Teaching and Learning. The data in Table 4 are similar to the data contained in Table 3 with the exception that ten respondents moved from preferring a totally non-graded system to a mixed system of evaluation. However, the strength of preference for the totally non-graded system remained greater. While it is evident from Table 3 that a majority of the respondents personally prefer the totally non-graded option, when the Center for Teaching and Learning is introduced into the item the respondents seem less inclined to impose their personal positions on the programs of the Center for Teaching and Learning.

The last and possibly the most important pieces of data were received in response to the open ended question printed below. Of those responding, 44 wrote comments. Several, which restated what has already been said, in almost the same way, were eliminated from this summary. The comments written by respondents present a wide range of feeling but generally (31 of the 44) indicated a preference for a non-graded option.

QUESTION: Are there any written comments about your experiences with evaluation that you would like to share? (One thing we have wondered about is the initial reaction people have to being in a non-graded system since for most it is a new process of evaluation and how their feelings change with increased experience in a non-graded system.)

"Totally non-graded and mixed grading systems are the only reasonable systems for present day needs in education." (Male - 39)

"I would simply say that in the CR-CD-CW method of evaluation I didn't think about the 'grading.' I was more interested in evaluating what a particular course, or activity meant as far as my own individual growth was concerned. Having had four years of a graded

system in college before that, I can honestly say those 4 years were mainly centered on the grade and my 'competition' with others. It was totally 'bad' as far as I'm concerned." (Female - 37)

"No doubt about it, the non-graded [process] is very threatening initially - both for elementary kids and adults. However, the positive ramifications of this experience more than justifies its use the first year or two - past the transition stage, there is no question as to its benefits." (Male - 25)

"Ref. #10 - I questioned whether any system ever adequately reflects what a student learns; short of a sort of detailed description of each student's semester by each student and teacher.
Ref. #15 - The non-graded system can promote more content learning or more conceptual learning or learning of processes, etc. Depends on the student's depth, approach, interest, etc.
Ref. #6 - I have found myself less ambivalent about whether I respect a teacher or not under nongraded system. In non-graded I could clear away the irrelevance of pre-arranged study and grades and get to the personal experience of relating to the teacher." (Male - 24)

"I do believe non-graded evaluation to be far superior to graded evaluation. I do believe, however, that a strong and sincere advisor-advisee relationship must develop to help promote honest people to people evaluation and a dialogue about competency before granting teacher certification. The basic requirement for certification would then not be grades but a personal justification and demonstration of growth within the non-graded program." (Male - 23)

"Non-graded systems (CR,CW,CD) seem to be a stop-gap between the absurd A,B,C,D,F system and a new, more reasonable way to evaluate. What is this thing we call CREDIT? What does 16 hours earned mean? (By any grading method.) If we are talking about learning, and its manifestations, we must deal with evaluation as a reciprocal action relating directly to the very learning process we are supposed to be evaluating. As the STUDENT is more intimately involved in his learning process, he must be the main evaluator of this process. Of course, guided by other outside facilitators, they are an important source of perspective and information for the person to be evaluated. In short, the evaluation process is too complex to be reduced to letter symbols. However, I favor the CR, CD, CW, system over others as it is less damaging. One other point: this year I - 1) read more, 2) read slower and understood more, 3) was free to discuss and pursue areas that were difficult. The CR-CD system learner is free to evaluate in his own terms what he is doing, and not just fit into someone else's evaluation system." (Male - 28)

"For the first time in my life at New School I didn't have to study something under the pressure of being presented with testing. It was so much fun and besides I'm bubbling over with the greatest amount of constructive learning I could possibly receive. It has made me a broader person. I've in my own mind, learned more in one year than in any other year of my life. Thank you New School for this year." (Female - 53)

"When I first entered into the non-graded system, I felt far less pressure and felt I could spend more "study time" on what was relevant to my needs rather than studying and cramming for a 'grade'." (Female - 47)

"It is the first time (non-grading) I have had a chance to concentrate on what I was in to (learning), without being interrupted by the pressures of studying for what the teacher thought I should be learning. I don't believe I remember what I studied to know, rather than what I wanted to know. I learned more 'content' this year; read and reread; thought about and questioned my ideas with friends; and we had the freedom to really explore my field." (Female - 28)

"Since I graduated from the New School, I have been involved in a graded graduate program. I resented the arbitrary nature of the grading system, its lack of validity in evaluating my knowledge and the imposed requirements which often times I felt were merely busy work." (Female - 23)

"Those students who are motivated by grades should be permitted to continue with them. Very close contact between student and teacher is essential." (Male - 30)

"For the first semester it was very hard to get anything done because I had so much freedom which I wasn't used to." (Female - 23)

"In my experience, people usually react negatively on first being exposed to a non-graded system but they become more positive as they better understand the non-graded system. However, people do not easily give up familiar things and a change-over is a very slow process." (Female - 22)

"That initial shock of being in a non-graded system - depending on my own initiative - is what I needed to understand that it [education] <u>was</u> up to <u>me</u>. That in itself was a very worthwhile learning experience which gave me a basis for later self-evaluation." (Female - 22)

"After years of teaching and giving grades from A-F I have come to the conclusion this system is inadequate because so much more

enters into evaluation than a single grade can show. I felt free for the first time last year under our CR-CD evaluation system." (Female - 38)

"I feel much more comfortable with the non-graded system because there is not that constant pressure of grades and mandatory attendance so many professors impose upon college students. I found I went to classes much more this year than before and felt I was getting something out of them. I was really interested in what was going on." (Female - 20)

"Initial exposure to New School evaluation system was accompanied by a feeling of freedom - freedom to learn what I wanted to learn, in my own way. Still feel this system is much more conducive to 'real' learning than a graded system." (female - 32)

"My reaction from the onset was relief. I have always worked hard to memorize and become a 'good student' with high grades. My first two years of college were spent burning gallons of midnight oil, just to make a deans list - but all the while hardly learning a thing relevant to my career and life now. I wonder now if I hadn't transferred to the New School in my junior year if I would have survived the pressure and pace. And I actually learned too - anything practical, fun, creative and innovative about my teaching now seems to have developed since my experience in the New School." (Female - 22)

"The hardest thing is realizing that no one is going to tell you what you've accomplished (as a student) and that you can't tell anybody what they've accomplished (as a teacher). There are obviously specific content-oriented subjects that can reflect clearly whether you know what you think you know, but most things - the things that tend to stay with you (perspective, for ex.) are hard to measure in any terms. The ability to take a chance is the core to the success of non-graded work. I, personally, prefer it tremendously." (Female - 22)

"The questions that non-graded courses raised in my mind were very helpful; getting rid of grades can't help but put much more emphasis on the content and form of courses and raise the issue of 'knowledge for what?' Also, if education students want to teach because they're interested in teaching, the motivation of grades is needless. Gradeless courses are an education in themselves." (Male - 23)

"My first contact with a non-graded system was in a mixed restricted set-up. I took some courses S-U being confident that I would receive an "S" without too much work. I also took some courses for grade, courses in which I was quite interested. The Honors Program through its colloquia and the College of Education through a course in Micro

Teaching, presented me with my field experiences with an imposed S-U system. This was because the courses were offered only for S-U credit. I really enjoyed and got a lot out of the courses. New School presented the completely non-graded system to me. I went through three fairly distinct changes in New School during my three semesters there. The first semester I had a number of requirements placed on me; and that semester I did the least. During the second semester I had few requirements and I started to get involved. The third semester I had no requirements by my advisor, and this was the semester I felt I had accomplished the most." (Male - 22)

"The crux of the problem seems to be whether or not a student has any meaningful relationships with his teachers - advisors. If there is willingness to share and explore I think the most adverse reactions can be handled as a positive learning experience." (Male - 22)

"The most potent force we can encourage in any learning experience is deep critical evaluation that does not inhibit the learners willingness to venture (expose) into another learning place. My answers to questions 10 and 13, reflect a personal view of evaluation - it is: Only action, the function of us really reflects adequately what any 'student' learns. #13 what kind of a question is this? Are we alive or dead?" (Male - 50)

"The degree of personal concern that teachers demonstrated in non-graded systems was something I had not experienced in graded systems-either as a student or teacher. This caring relationship is enhanced in a non-threatening grading system. Learning became something I did for myself and not for the teacher." (Male - 24)

"Advisors vary in their means of assessing accomplishment - some require written reports of activities during the semester, some require only a feeling of satisfaction from their advisees. I think the N.S. program could very easily be exploited for a degree only due to the latter. Couldn't there be some more comprehensive and equitable form of evaluation?" (Female - 22)

"For myself, being in a non-graded system for the first time this past year was like having blinders removed from my eyes, experiencing peripheral vision for the first time. The horizon expanded, the limits were removed and I no longer was required to learn only the material the teacher assigned, but could explore those interesting byways with no fear that I would fail a test because I hadn't put in enough hours cramming. I could even do a concentrated independent study when something came along which absorbed my interest (which I did a couple of times) without worrying about my other subjects - the narrow stifling path of 'learning' - this much you are required to learn - sorry, there isn't time to study anything else, it's not required - the feeling of questions unasked, of wondering unsatisfied, of frustration - the time, the pace, the inexorable

succession of one assignment after another, eventually the smothering of one frustration by a succeeding one ---- For me, this past year was one of tremendous mental and intellectual stimulation and expansion. I would hate to go back to a graded system (although I really do feel I would have earned As or Bs in everything I studied - and I was studying many hours every day.) However - I would qualify my answers on this questionnaire, as I do know of people who were not very self-motivated, and who did not do as well in this system as they might have done if they'd been pushed by a grading system." (Female - 48)

"I have always taught in a graded system which I do not care for. I have not had any previous experience in a non-graded system." (Male - 53)

"I reacted very positively to the nongraded system. I really dislike a graded system. It appears to me that the reasons I have heard people give for preferring a graded system are not particularly constructive or healthy ones, i.e., 'I like the reward of a grade.' I don't feel that a graded system will teach students to know what they want, to be satisfied with the quality of their own work, to evaluate their work and growth effectively or to know themselves better. It seems to serve as a second choice method of evaluation for those who don't rely on their own personal evaluation and judgment." (Female - 22)

"1) Nongraded must be supplemented by increased concern with positive, constant evaluation on the part of the teacher.
2) My nongraded system at Swarthmore was a Honors program involving outside examiners. At the end of our junior and senior years we had oral and written exams written and administered by outside people on the 8 seminars we had taken during this period and this system, I think, worked very well. The teacher and student were colleagues in the search for knowledge in our seminar - since the teacher was demoted from the evaluator role. Ultimate evaluation I think is still important - and I think gradations (in our case Honors, High Honors, Highest Honors) makes sense - a kid should get feedback on how well he's mastered a skill - not just whether he's mastered it." (Female - 24)

"From my experience in the non-graded system, I found learning to be a wonderful exciting experiment. I took courses that appealed to me and still were applicable to my teaching requirements. It helped me see so clearly how my students feel about learning. I believe from this fact alone I can be a better teacher." (Female - 61)

"I personally found that I could better use my time at study to learn the things I wanted to learn and needed to learn for personal or career reasons, instead of learning things to please a teacher or pass a test or earn a grade mark." (Female - 45)

"I am convinced that 'grades' are wrong, but for one who is steeped in such traditions, I would favor a slow, gradual change to 'the ungraded way.' Very cautious, perhaps, but moving slowly in the right direction. It takes time to learn to evaluate oneself honestly! It's hard for some people to be self-directed. There is an uncomfortable feeling of 'being let down'; of teachers not caring enough; of why bother going to school at all." (Female - 49)

"My initial reaction was a slump after a lifetime of being told what to do, not having any idea what to do. Eventually personal interests directed my reading and activities, and a period of exhilarating personal growth was experienced. The same slump occurred the first few days of vacation after 9 months' teaching; after a period of having to do things all week, every week, freedom meant lack of motivation and lethargy. Self-motivation came to the fore quickly, though, since it was only lately allowed to flourish at New School. I would suggest that, since some students might lack the flexibility (or whatever) to cope with no external motivation, both ungraded and graded evaluation systems be provided as alternatives, perhaps with the requirement that every student try at least one ungraded semester. Had I been give a choice, I might have preferred the security of grades and never discovered the freeom of self-motivation. And if less than one semester were to constitute a trial ungraded run, the initial slump might scare off initiates. I can take a long time to adjust." (Female - 26)

"Since non-grading is relatively new in elementary grades, students still tend to think of a mark such as P (progress acceptable) as an A, I (Improvement shown) as a B, NC (Needs Improvement) as a C, etc. I would prefer to see no grading system (only conferences) in an elementary school." (Female - 24)

"I feel that the institution can accommodate most any type of evaluation system. The learning and evaluation is between the student and instructor. The choice should be theirs, and they should have many alternatives to choose from. Too many instructors abdicate their responsibility in the evaluation process. The instructor must make an active effort to help the student evaluate his progress. This spring I applied for law school at Marquette University. Because the school (M.U.) and the Law School Data Assembly Service could not make any evaluation of my "CR's," I was not admitted. The fault does not lie with the New School's grading system nor with the M.U. admission committee's policies. I have to accept that I could not have a

humane open undergraduate education and prepare for a traditional profession. I wish I could have - however, students should be constantly warned that the above situation might happen to them. Or they should be given the choice of grading systems in an effort to get the best of two worlds. (Preparation for a profession and a liberal education.)" (Male - 22)

"In my situation, parents accepted a reporting system of commendable, satisfactory, improving, needs improving. A checklist of items academically and socially were checked. In each encounter with parents, though, I made a special effort to mention my feelings on grades such as What does 92 or B mean? Can you tell me? The question approach worked great." (Female - 22)

To summarize the preceding data, it is clear that students who have been involved in the New School favor a non-graded option. Students generally express the feeling that a non-graded system of evaluation promotes greater self-direction and self-evaluation. In addition, students report that a non-graded system of evaluation promotes more meaningful teacher evaluation, more adequately reflects what students learn and promotes increased student involvement in learning activities.

CONCLUSION

This report has balanced its rationale for proposing a non-graded marking system against the ineffectiveness and sometimes detrimental effects of grades. In summary, the proposal for a CR, CD, CW marking system to be used in the elementary program of the Center is recommended with the conviction that it will:

- direct student involvement in setting of goals and standards in learning
- foster an emphasis on the process of evaluation characterized by ongoing mutual, critical and supportive exchange among persons engaged in learning

- encourage creative exploration of ideas with no discredit of learning through error

- not penalize a student for failure which may be due to many circumstances and which in itself may have a powerful effect on that student's direction and strength of effort

- establish an atmosphere of broader exchange and challenge between and among faculty and students.

A challenge to any innovative evaluation system is how it succeeds in aiding the student and prospective employers, and graduate and professional schools in selection procedures. In place of certification through a passing GPA, the Center must be responsible along with the student in providing for such purposes a folder in which information about the student's progress, competencies, interests, goals is provided in a form which is both accurately related to the student's actual experiences and useful. Such a folder-type evaluation system has been criticized because of the time it requires of faculty, the possibility that written evaluations provide no more information than the traditional A-F system, and some question about the accuracy or "objectivity" of such information. These problems potentially exist in the non-graded system of evaluation, but they can be turned to advantage. Thus, the University of California, Santa Cruz recognized the variance of quality and purpose of faculty evaluations and dealt with it by maintaining ongoing dialogues and study of the process. They noted considerable improvement in the quality of these evaluations over the last four years of their program. Though discussions about the purposes and effectiveness of evaluation are time-consuming, they are not "lost" time since they

contribute directly to a better understanding of the learning process and the serious responsibility that accompanies both evaluation of self and others.

The Center elementary program would, furthermore, be responsible for providing prospective employers and graduate schools information and assistance needed where questions arise concerning the form or content of student files.

The marking system being proposed is based, in part, on the view that education is not a matter of amassing merit or demerits but a task of developing both socially useful and personally satisfying skills. It is strongly believed that the use of this system is also vital in the task of involving students of education in a complex but crucial ongoing process of evaluation essential to a "learner" and "teacher."

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QUESTIONNAIRE

The Undergraduate Committee of the Center for Teaching and Learning is presently studying various evaluation systems (graded--non-graded). The results of this report will be presented to the curriculum committee along with the Undergraduate Committee's recommendation for the type of system to be used in the Center. This question is of critical importance to the functioning of the Center and we ask for your assistance by completing this questionnaire.

Please use as a guide for the questionnaire the following descriptions and letter notations (A, B, C, & D) of evaluation systems.

A. Grades only: A = marked excellence D = passing but low

B = superior F = failure

C = average I = incomplete

W = withdrawal

B. Totally non-graded system--possible symbols: CR = credit received

(No restrictions on number or type of courses.) CD = credit deferred

CW = credit withdrawn

P = pass

F = fail

S = satisfactory

U = unsatisfactory

C. Mixed System: Both grades and non-graded symbols used; student and teacher have some choice about which will be used in a course. There are no restrictions on which courses can be taken for non-grades or how many.

D. Mixed Restricted System: Some kind of restrictions on number of courses allowed for non-grades and restrictions on the kind of course (Ex. no courses within any major can be taken for non-

grades). Hidden grading may also occur, i.e., only registrar and student knows that the student has chosen to take course for non-grade; registrar converts instructor's letter grade to non-graded notation (P, F, S, U).

I. BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

1. Sex: Female_____ Male_____

2. Age_____

3. How many years have you been a student and/or teacher under the following systems?

Graded System (A, B,...)

As a Student: Elementary and Secondary_____

College_____

As a Teacher: Elementary and Secondary_____

College_____

Non-Graded (Cr, CD, P-F, S-U) Mixed Systems (See descriptions on P. 1) (Circle response below, B, C, D)

As a Student: (Mark System) Elementary and Secondary_____ B C D

College_____ B C D

As a Teacher: (Mark System) Elementary and Secondary_____ B C D

College_____ B C D

II. Considering a graded system of evaluation how do you feel about each of the following: (SA = strongly agree, A = agree, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree; please circle your response.)

1. Has positive motivating effect on the learner. SA A D SD

2. Produces greater competition among students. SA A D SD

3. Encourages self evaluation. SA A D SD

4.	Enhances learning.	SA A D SD
5.	Promotes closer teacher-student relationship.	SA A D SD
6.	Promotes student respect for teachers.	SA A D SD
7.	Promotes teacher respect for students.	SA A D SD
8.	Increases exploration of wider range of courses.	SA A D SD
9.	Encourages more meaningful teacher evaluation.	SA A D SD
10.	Reflects adequately what the student learns.	SA A D SD
11.	Encourages more meaningful student evaluation.	SA A D SD
12.	Increases student involvement in learning activities.	SA A D SD
13.	Promotes more relevant career learning activities.	SA A D SD
14.	Promotes more relevant personal learning activities.	SA A D SD
15.	Promotes more content learning.	SA A D SD
16.	Promotes greater self-directed learning.	SA A D SD

III. Considering a non-graded system of evaluation how do you feel about each of the following? (SA = strongly agree, A = agree, D = disagree, SD = strongly disagree; please circle your response.)

1.	Has a positive motivating effect on the learner.	SA A D SD
2.	Produces greater competition among students.	SA A D SD
3.	Encourages self-evaluation.	SA A D SD

4.	Enhances learning.	SA A D SD
5.	Promotes closer teacher-student relationship.	SA A D SD
6.	Promotes student respect for teachers.	SA A D SD
7.	Promotes teacher respect for students.	SA A D SD
8.	Increases exploration of wider range of courses.	SA A D SD
9.	Encourages more meaningful teacher evaluation.	SA A D SD
10.	Reflects adequately what the student learns.	SA A D SD
11.	Encourages more meaningful student evaluation.	SA A D SD
12.	Increases student involvement in learning activities.	SA A D SD
13.	Promotes more relevant career learning activities.	SA A D SD
14.	Promotes more relevant personal learning activities.	SA A D SD
15.	Promotes more content learning.	SA A D SD
16.	Promotes greater self-directed learning.	SA A D SD

IV. Are there any written comments about your experiences with evaluation that you would like to share? (One thing we have wondered about is the initial reaction people have to being in a non-graded system since for most it is a new process of evaluation and how their feelings change with increased experience in a non-graded system.)

V. Indicate the degree of your concern about the following by checking the appropriate column. (NC = no concern, SC = slight concern, MC = moderate concern, GC = great concern; please circle your response.)

The effect of two years of non-graded work on:

1. Admission into Graduate School	NC	SC	MC	GC
2. Financial aid	NC	SC	MC	GC
3. Employment opportunities	NC	SC	MC	GC

VI. Which system of evaluation do you personally prefer? (A, B, C, or D; see descriptions on page 1.)

A. Totally graded

B. Totally non-graded

C. Mixed system

D. Mixed restricted system

E. No preference

How strong is your preference? (Circle one) Not very strong Moderately strong Very strong

VII. Which system of evaluation do you feel best suits the programs designed for the Center for Teaching and Learning?

A. Totally graded

B. Totally non-graded

C. Mixed system

D. Mixed restricted system

E. No preference--no knowledge of Center programs

How strong is your preference? (Circle one) Not very strong Moderately strong Very strong

THANK YOU!

Universities and Employers Called in Telephone Survey

University of Minnesota - Dr. Lambert - Chairman, Elementary Education

Graduate school in education looks at the applicant's teaching experience, the scores on tests including the Miller Analogies and Coop English, and the GPA. Usually will not admit applicants without teaching experience.

Students without a GPA sufficient for a judgment would not be at a disadvantage if there is a sufficient, detailed documentation of their performance. Must be more than letters of recommendation.

The folder would be a way to overcome the disadvantage but should include evaluation by several faculty.

University of Nebraska - Dr. Rutledge - Assistant Dean of Graduate School

There is no GRE requirement, but applicant must have recommendations and a GPA of 2.5.

Students without a 2.5 GPA would be considered on basis of other information. A dossier would be very helpful. He stressed that other departments were more reliant upon GPA and less flexible than education. However, he seemed firm that students from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage in applying to education graduate program.

Moorhead State College - Dr. Robbins - Dean of Education

Applicants must have a 500 verbal score on the GRE. Usually they should have a 3.0 GPA.

They are increasingly having to come to grips with the problem of students from a CR-CW system of grading. Moorhead State is now doing this in the senior year for its students - just giving a pass or fail for the whole year.

The graduate school of education will not put these students at a disadvantage, but other graduate schools might be more troublesome.

"Necessary for us to move in this direction or we will be passed by. Elementary and Secondary education are changing fast and higher education must adjust to the changes or become a meaningless mechanism."

University of South Dakota

Most important criteria are the applicant's abilities to express himself or herself orally and in written form. They have a form for written expression and an interview. Also are interested in what the applicant wants to do. Since field is getting crowded the applicants' purpose is a large part of the decision.

Also they look at teaching experience, recommendations, and academic record. Students from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage. A dossier would be most helpful. This method is what USD uses for its doctoral candidates now and they are moving toward this kind of evaluation in their undergraduate program.

Antioch College - Joann Asloms - Assistant to Dean of Education Graduate School

Antioch primarily tries to determine student's ability to relate to the classroom. A student from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage. Antioch already operates on this basis. A dossier would be helpful. Recommendations are also important.

University of Massachusetts - Earl Seidman - Assistant Dean of Education

Main criteria are previous experience and a commitment which is demonstrated by prior activity.

The admissions process is decentralized into about 12 programs, with each program responsible for its admissions. A student from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage. A dossier would be very helpful.

Harvard University - Dr. Duchay - Assistant Dean of Education Graduate School

We look for intelligence, energy, creativity, and commitment. We are suspicious of measures which have been used, including GPA and test scores. We are looking more at the student's experience and their evaluation of themselves and by others. There is a move away from grades in colleges. A dossier would be more helpful than GPA or test scores.

Michigan State University - Dr. Scott - Assistant Dean of Education Graduate School

They look at teaching experience, other experience, interview, answers to an admission form, GPA, test scores and recommendations.

A student from a CR-CW system could overcome a lack of GPA by good letters from faculty. A dossier would be preferable to GPA since GPA's are faulty indicators.

University of Montana - Dean Rummel of Education

Criteria are teaching experience and academic record near 3.0 GPA. Personally Dean Rummel would like to get away from GPA requirements but the University Graduate Council is still very concerned with grades. A dossier might be helpful but the graduate school might not consider this sufficient to substitute for a GPA.

Bemidji State College - Dr. Bornschlegel - Division of Education

Not too extensive a process because enrollments are low. Usually a Miller Analogies score of 40 and a GPA of 2.75 are required. However, if student came from a CR-CW system, there would not be a problem. A dossier would suffice as a substitute. He personally encourages this direction in grading.

School systems:

Rapid City, South Dakota - Mr. Grant - Director of Personnel

Primary criterion is student teaching experience and evaluation of that. Also use an interview, recommendations and transcript.

Students from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage. Believes dossier would be an excellent approach and more meaningful than grades.

Said he would like to get some graduates from the New School program.

Boise, Idaho - Dr. Stuart - Elementary Hiring

Criteria used are interview, recommendations and answers to application form questions. A student from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage.

Billings, Montana - Mr. Frank - Elementary Hiring Officer

They look for ability to relate to people, adaptability to change. Recommendations and interview are important. A student from a CR-CW system would not be at a disadvantage. GPA is not important. A dossier could be very helpful.

Bemidji, Minnesota - Mr. Schuiling - in charge of hiring teachers

Criteria include teaching experience and recommendations. Students are not at a disadvantage from a CR-CW system. A dossier would help. GPA is not important. Interview will be the most important factor.

Minneapolis, Minnesota - Mr. Templin - Personnel Department

Student teaching experience or prior teaching experience is the most important factor. If no GPA available a dossier would be helpful. There is also a written exam which school system has given to applicants.